

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

**Summary on
Eighteenth Chapter
by
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SUMMARY (EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER)

- Note:
1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
 2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* dealt with Self-knowledge in the XIII, XIV, and XV chapters. In the XVI and XVII chapters were discussed the values without which the mind will not be fit enough to receive the knowledge of the Self. With this, the Lord has exhaustively dealt with all the aspects of vedantic teaching.

In such a situation, *Arjuna* puts his last question to *Kṛṣṇa* seeking to clarify the difference between *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*. Now begins the XVIII chapter answering *Arjuna*'s question. *Bhagavān* takes this opportunity to sum up His entire teaching which has been spread over the last sixteen chapters.

The chapter begins with *Arjuna*'s question — “Oh Lord! I desire to know the true nature of *sannyāsa* and *tyāga* distinctly”(1). *Kṛṣṇa* replies by citing the views of some people (2, 3). The Lord gives his verdict from the 4th verse onwards. *Bhagavān* does not differentiate *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*. (This indicates that they are not different according to the Lord.) *Kṛṣṇa* emphasizes the importance of obligatory rites (*nityakarma*) like *yajña*, *dāna*, and *tapas*, and asserts that they should never be given up (5,6) (We should note that this advice is given to people with impurity. *Śāstras* allow a person with purity to renounce *nityakarma* also). In the next three verses, the Lord divides renunciation into three types — tamasic, rajasic, and sattvic. (For details see the chart)

In the following verses, *Bhagavān* glorifies sattvic renunciation. (In fact, sattvic renunciation is nothing but *karmayoga*.) A *karmayogi* renounces all the results of action. In due course he gets Self-knowledge. He is not affected by the consequences whether they are good, evil, or a mixture of both (10 to 12).

Topic	Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
1. <i>Sannyāsa</i> (Renunciation)	Renunciation of results of <i>nityakarmas</i> . (9)	Renunciation of <i>nithyakarmas</i> due to fear of bodily strain. (8)	Renunciation of <i>nithyakarmas</i> due to the ignorance of their value. (7)
2. <i>Jīvānam</i> (Knowledge)	That by which one sees the undivided Self in and through all the beings. (20)	That because of which one takes the Self to be distinct in every being. (21)	That because of which one takes the body as the Self. (22)
3. <i>Karma</i> (Action)	Duty performed without attachment and expectations. (23)	Action done with egoism for the sake of results. (24)	Indiscriminate action done without considering the consequences. (25)
4. <i>Kartā</i> (Doer)	One who is detached, perseverant, enthusiastic, unassuring, and calm in success and failure. (26)	One who is attached, greedy, harmful, and subject to elation and depression. (27)	One who is undisciplined, uncultured, arrogant, harmful dull, and procrastinating. (28)

Topic	Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
5. <i>Buddhi</i> (Intellect)	That which knows <i>dharma</i> and <i>adharma</i> , right and wrong as well the bondage and liberation. (30)	That which improperly knows <i>dharma</i> and <i>adharma</i> , as well as right and wrong. (31)	That which knows <i>dharma</i> , <i>adharma</i> , etc., perversely. (32)
6. <i>Dhṛti</i> (Will)	That by which one sustains the functions of all organs in the spiritual path and which is made unswerving through <i>yoga</i> . (33)	That by which one pursues <i>dharma</i> , <i>artha</i> , and <i>kama</i> craving for their benefits. (34)	That by which one does not give up sleep, fear, grief, and indulgence. (35)
7. <i>Sukham</i> (Happiness)	That which is like poison in the beginning, the beginning, like poison in like nectar in the end, and which is born of Self-knowledge. (37)	That which is like nectar in the end, and which is born of contact between sense organs and objects. (38)	That which deludes the mind in the beginning and in the end, and which is born of indolence, and negligence. (39)

From the 13th to the 17th verse, *Kṛṣṇa* gives a gist of *jñānayoga*. Five factors are involved in every action — the body, *prāṇa*, the mind with sense organs, the ego, and the presiding divinity of all these. (In short, they are the four *kośas* and the presiding divinity) (13, 14). All actions, good or evil, are accomplished through these five factors only (15). The Self is not involved in any action. But, due to identification with the above factors, one mistakes oneself to be a doer (16). On the other hand, the wiseman, who does not have the false ‘I’ (*ahankāra*) born of identification, is free from all *karmas* in spite of the activities of his equipments. He is neither a doer, nor an enjoyer (17).

Taking a diversion, *Bhagavān* introduces six factors necessary for any *vyavahāra* (transaction). They are — knower, knowledge, known, doer, action, and the instrument of action (18). Of these six factors, *Kṛṣṇa* takes up three (knowledge, action, and doer) for further division based on three *gunas* (19). Later, the Lord divides the intellect and will also on the same basis (29). Finally, *Kṛṣṇa* talks about three types of happiness (36). (For details see the chart).

Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic by pointing out that there is nothing in the creation which is free from these three *gunas* (40).

With an intention to sum up the entire *Gītā*-teaching, *Bhagavān* gives the essence of *karmayoga* (41 to 49) and *jñānayoga* (50 to 55) in the following section.

The duties of the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *sūdras*) are prescribed in the scriptures based on their nature (41 to 44). *Karmayoga* is the performance of one’s own duty as an offering to the Lord. This renders the mind fit for knowledge (45, 46). Here, *Kṛṣṇa* makes it a point to emphasize the importance of *svadharma* (duty). It is necessary not only for the sake of purity but for the sake of social harmony also. Shirking one’s duty can only lead to total confusion (47, 48). The purified seeker, who is detached and self-controlled, will soon attain liberation through *jñānayoga* (40).

Now the Lord introduces *jñānayoga* and gives a brief outline of meditation i.e. *nididhyāsanam* (which is necessary to assimilate the knowledge gained through *śravaṇam* and *mananam*). Having restrained all organs and having given up all disturbing thoughts like desire, anger etc., one should remain in a secluded place (51 to 53). Being firmly established in his *Brahman*-nature, he becomes free from grief and desire. Being the same to all beings, he enjoys the highest devotion towards the Lord (54). Having known the Lord in His true nature, he becomes one with Him (55). (Becoming one is nothing but dropping the notion of division).

In the following verses (56 to 63) *Kṛṣṇa* comes back to *karmayoga*, emphasizing the aspect of devotion i.e. the attitude of surrender. Constantly remembering the Lord, if one dedicates all his actions to Him, that devotee attains the Lord ultimately by effortlessly crossing over all obstacles (56 to 58). On the other hand, if one tries to evade his duty, which is based on his nature, it will be in vain and harmful (58 to 60). Hence, surrendering to the Lord of the heart, the controller of all, a devotee should strive to attain supreme peace by His grace (61 to 62). With this, *Bhagavān* concludes the teaching and directs *Arjuna* to do whatever he likes (63). But, the affection towards *Arjuna* overpowers *Kṛṣṇa* once again (64). Hence, the Lord repeats His teaching emphatically one again — “Fix the mind on Me. (Be) My devotee. (Be) My worshipper. Surrender to Me. You shall reach Me alone. Truly do I promise to you. You are dear to Me. Having renounced all actions, seek Me, the nondual, (as your) shelter. I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve” (65, 66). (These two verses are presenting *karmayoga* and *jñānayoga* in capsule-form.)

Having thus concluded the teaching, the Lord states the qualifications necessary to receive this. One who has no faith, discipline, devotion, and desire to know should not be given this knowledge (67).

Now comes the *phalam*. One who imparts and the one who receives this wisdom attain the Lord Himself (68 to 70). Even the one who merely hears this with faith attains higher worlds (71).

Being satisfied with the teaching, *Kṛṣṇa* asks *Arjuna* whether his delusion is gone. *Arjuna* gratefully acknowledges, promising to abide by the Lord's teaching (72, 73).

Now *Saṅjaya* addresses *Dhṛitarāṣṭra*, exclaiming how blessed he was to listen to this glorious dialogue between the Lord and *Arjuna* (74, 75). *Saṅjaya* remembers the whole dialogue and the cosmic vision with thrill (76, 77). He concludes his remarks with the declaration — “Where there is *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord of *yoga*, and where there is *Arjuna*, the wielder of the bow, there will be permanent wealth, victory, prosperity, and justice” (78).

The topics of this chapter are:

1. <i>Sannyāsa</i> and <i>tyāga</i>	1 to 12
2. <i>Jñānayoga</i>	13 to 17
3. Three types of knowledge, action, doer, intellect, will, and happiness	18 to 40
4. <i>Karmayoga</i> (emphasising <i>svadharma</i>)	41 to 49
5. <i>Jñānayoga</i> (emphasising meditation)	50 to 55
6. <i>Karmayoga</i> (emphasising devotion)	56 to 62
7. Final summary	63 to 66
8. Lord's concluding remarks	67 to 73
9. <i>Saṅjaya</i> 's concluding remarks	74 to 78

Since the chapter begins with *Sannyāsa* which is the means of liberation, it is called *Mokṣasannyāsa-yoga*.
